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TOP STORY EDITOR'S PICK

# How Buhl is planning for growth with help from a \$30,000 health grant

PAT CALDWELL For the Times-News Dec 11, 2024 0



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The city of Buhl plans to use grant money to craft a new comprehensive plan to keep pace with growth and wants public input on the venture.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY OF BUHL

The city of Buhl plans to use grant money to craft a new comprehensive plan to keep pace with growth and wants public input on the venture.

The last time the city updated its comprehensive plan was in 2017. Since then, the city grew by just over 4%.

A comprehensive plan is a key tool for local government as it helps officials determine policies, develop land use rules and frame a long-term strategy for housing, transportation, infrastructure and economic development.

“With the amount of growth we are seeing in the last five years, we also have some (city) code updates, especially in our land use, which need to be addressed,” Buhl City Clerk Karen Drown said.

Buhl already features a very large subdivision that has been planned, Drown said.

“Phases 1 and 2 are already developed and filling in now,” she said. “So, we are seeing residential growth come in. We are assuming commercial will follow, just to support the residents.”

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The city plans to use a \$30,000 grant from the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation For Health to kick-start the planning process. Drown said the city is also preparing to apply for a second, \$20,000 grant from the Idaho Department of Commerce to help pay for the plan update.

The city has inked a contract with Clearwater Financial, a Boise municipal advisory firm, to help spearhead the initial stages of the comprehensive plan revamp.

“The comprehensive plan is important to the community at this point in its history,” said Abbey Erquiaga, project manager at Clearwater Financial. “It provides the community the opportunity to proactively define the priorities and future.”

Erquiaga said Clearwater Financial will assist the city “in prioritizing goals, incorporating community feedback, and ensuring the plan reflects a shared vision for sustainable growth.”

Drown said the venture is still in its infancy.

“Right now, we are in the visionary stage,” she said.

The visionary stage, she said, includes as much comment from the public as possible. Once the city collects public feedback, officials will move to the next step.

“We will start addressing all the sections of the plan from the input we receive,” Drown said.

#### **Take the survey**

The city of Buhl crafted a survey to gather public input on the comprehensive plan effort. The survey is available online at <https://www.cityofbuhl.us/comprehensive-plan-2024.html> or residents can visit city hall and get a printed copy of the survey.

Public involvement in the plan is crucial.

“This has a huge community participation component,” Drown said.

The city also plans to hold public meetings and sponsor other outreach techniques to engage residents on the updated blueprint.

Drown said the comprehensive plan update — from start to finish — could take anywhere from 13 to 18 months to finish.

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